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The Classics as an Introduction to the Appreciation of the Drama (I)¹

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Rockford College

I am glad to have the opportunity to participate in this symposium on the Classics as an introduction to the appreciation of literary types, for I believe that teachers of the Classics need always to keep in mind that they are teachers of literature as well as of language. A divisional system, which brings together the department of Classics and the departments of English and of Modern Foreign Languages, makes an instructor more conscious of his task as a teacher of literature. In my own college by the very organization of our curriculum we are committed to the theory that all courses beyond the two elementary courses in foreign language are courses in literature (excepting, of course, those in composition, conversation, or methods). The first courses in literature, whether English, French, German, Spanish, Latin, or Classical Literature in Translation, are grouped together,² and from these the student selects one to satisfy the requirement in literature for the degree. Such a requirement assumes that the Latin course, for example, does for the student what a course in English literature does. Moreover, part of the requirement for the major examination set by the division for all students in literature, whether English or foreign, has been the interpretation of a literary text. In investigating some sixty college catalogues I find that where a specific requirement in literature is made it is commonly in English or American literature,³ although a few colleges are content with any course given primarily as literature; and one college accepts as an alternative a course in comparative literature and another, a course in classical literature in translation. Why should not courses in Latin or Greek literature or in modern foreign literature be universally accepted as satisfying the college requirement in literature? Literary criticism need not be left to the department of English, although we all recognize the difficulties involved in mastering the language and in developing speed in reading. Students of Latin will ordinarily read far fewer texts than students of English or even of a modern foreign literature, but their attention need not be, as I fear it all too frequently is, largely limited to linguistic and historical study.

In this discussion of the drama I shall for the most part confine my remarks to Roman drama inasmuch as the Classics instructor in these days rarely has the opportunity to introduce his students to drama through the ideal medium of Greek. May I assure you that I am not claiming for the study of Roman drama any superiority over the drama of other great literatures as an introduction to dramatic form except perhaps in its position as the connecting link between Greek drama on the one hand and modern drama on the other. I

do, however, believe that Latin literature offers adequate illustration of dramatic form, especially comedy. Until the comparatively recent discovery of large fragments of Menander, the twenty-six plays of Plautus and Terence were the sole representatives of the Greek New Comedy of manners and have had an almost incalculable influence on later drama. It need scarcely be said that the case for the study of Roman tragedy is much weaker than the case for comedy. The only Latin tragedies extant, the ten plays that have come down under the name of Seneca, seem pale reflections of the magnificent tragedy of fifth century Athens; but if the student can not read Greek tragedy in the original, should he be content with translations, or is there something to be gained through the study of a Roman tragedy? Of course, Seneca will never again enjoy the exaggerated reputation he had in the sixteenth century when the elder Scaliger ranked him with the great Greek tragedians, even considering him in some respects superior to Euripides. I am, however, inclined to agree with W. F. J. Knight, who a few years ago stated that "Seneca deserves to recover some of the reputation which he enjoyed in Elizabethan times."⁴ T. S. Eliot, in his introduction to the Elizabethan translation of Seneca in the Tudor series, observes that "Seneca's plays might, in fact, be practical models for the modern 'broadcast drama'" and that the Senecan form is one "which might be interesting to attempt in our own time."⁵ Affinities between Senecan tragedy and modern opera⁶ or the monodrama of Cornelia Otis Skinner are also apparent.⁷

In my opinion a course in the Roman drama as such may be advantageously taught as early as the first year of the college Latin course. That comedy is highly appropriate reading material for the fifth year of Latin has been shown by Professor W. L. Carr's study of the vocabulary density and the vocabulary burden of the works of Roman writers most frequently read in the first year of college.⁸ The vocabulary burdens of Plautus' *Menaechmi* and Terence's *Phormio*, for example, are far less heavy than those of the lyric poets Catullus and Horace, and in this respect Roman comedy ranks next to Cicero's *Letters* and the *De Amicitia*, which have the lowest vocabulary burdens. Once the early Latin forms are mastered, the student can rapidly gain facility in reading. The colloquial idiom and the modernity of situation and treatment in Roman comedy likewise have their appeal for college freshmen. Certainly some students in reading Plautus, for the first time, get the feeling of Latin as a language that was actually spoken. So far as I know, no vocabulary study is available for Seneca. His plays, however, present no extraordinary difficulties for the student who has mastered the vocabulary required for Vergil in the fourth year of Latin in high school. A study of the Latin offerings of sixty colleges yields the

information that seven have advanced courses in Roman drama (Plautus, Terence, and Seneca combined),⁹ although none but Rockford has the temerity to offer such a course for freshmen. Something less than half of these colleges do include in their freshman reading course one or more Roman comedies.

The first task that confronts the instructor is the selection of plays to be read. In my own course, "Introduction to Roman Drama," one comedy each of Plautus and Terence and a tragedy of Seneca are read. The reading of three plays usually necessitates spending somewhat more than a semester on drama. My choice in comedy has been governed largely by the following considerations: (1) the dramatic excellence of a play (a) in the management of the plot for comic effect, (b) in the delineation of character, and (c) in verbal style; (2) the desirability of illustrating variety in comic form through the selection of such types as character comedy, romantic comedy, comedy of intrigue, farce, etc.; (3) the wish to show the relation of Roman comedy to modern comedy by reading a play or plays used by later dramatists; and (4) the availability of good texts. In the choice of a tragedy somewhat similar principles apply; with Seneca the relation of the Roman play to its Greek prototype is an additional consideration.

In spite of the supposedly narrow range of Roman comedy, the plays of Plautus and Terence afford a considerable variety. For romantic comedy there is the *Rudens* with its setting on the seacoast of Africa and its charming heroine finally restored to her lover and her long-lost parents, or the *Captives* with its chivalrous devotion of a servant to his master, pronounced by Lessing in the eighteenth century the finest piece ever staged. The *Aulularia*, the inspiration of Molière's *L'Avare*, is Plautus' nearest approach to comedy of character and ranks among his best plays. The tragicomedy of the *Amphitruo*, the forefather of Jean Giraudoux' *Amphitryon 38*, is unique in its burlesque of heroic legend. The *Mostellaria*, which the Knox College Players presented last night with such zest and gaiety, the *Miles Gloriosus*, the *Phormio*, are masterpieces of comedy of intrigue; and for pure farce, the *Menaechmi* can scarcely be excelled. The *Andria* has little of the comic; it approaches the category of sentimental comedy. Although few will agree on the exact classification of the plays or on the best play of either dramatist, that in itself is not important.

For my freshmen I have intentionally chosen two comedies, the *Menaechmi* and the *Adelphoe*, which are markedly unlike. The dramatic excellence of the *Menaechmi* lies not in character but in the riotously funny situations growing out of mistakes in identity, and in lively dialogue. On the other hand, the excellence of the *Adelphoe* concerns itself with character and those aspects of the plot which arise out of character, although it is far from lacking in the comic. I have always found it better to begin with Plautus, since his broader wit and humor make a more immediate appeal to the student; certainly he is eminently successful in that primary function of comedy, the creation of laughter. The *Menaechmi* also affords opportunity to compare Plautus with Shakespeare in his *Comedy of Errors* and the more recent *Boys from Syracuse*. The *Adelphoe*,

to which Molière's *L'Ecole des Maris* and several less well-known English comedies are indebted, is an example of high comedy; its problem is the conflict between two systems of education, the one based on severity and repression, the other on indulgence and mutual confidence; and the basic question is not how the young men may enjoy their loves, but how children may best be brought up. The events of the play prove the weaknesses inherent in both systems and reveal the wisdom of the golden mean. Horace, you remember, said that a poet either aims to delight or to be useful. If the lack of the serious in most of the plays of Plautus seems to you a defect in drama to be taught to young students, and if you have been looking for a comedy with even a little of that moral earnestness that Aristophanes in the *Frogs* suggests a poet should show, the implicit teaching of the *Adelphoe* will help to satisfy you. In a sense, to use the words of Horace, it does mingle the *utile* with the *dulce*. With its well-managed double plot, its contrasted pairs of brothers, its delightful use of comic irony, its surprise ending, and its moral implications, the *Adelphoe* provides I believe the best available Roman comedy for the study of dramatic form. Where only one Latin comedy is read, it has commonly been the *Phormio*. I am wondering whether the *Adelphoe* in a modern edition¹⁰ might not rightly take its place.

My choice of a tragedy of Seneca is for several reasons the *Troades*. In the first place, it has power to move the reader and is comparatively free from rhetoric. Dryden, in his "Essay of Dramatic Poesy," considered the masterpiece of Seneca "that scene in the *Troades* where Ulysses is seeking for Astyanax to kill him: there you see," he wrote, "the tenderness of a mother so represented in Andromache that it raises compassion to a high degree in the reader, and bears the nearest resemblance of anything in the tragedies of the ancients to the excellent scenes of passion in Shakespeare." A recent writer praises this same scene as "one of the very greatest scenes in all ancient drama."¹¹ Undoubtedly, the *Troades* is Seneca's best play. In the second place, it suffers less in comparison with its prototypes than any other Senecan play, its plot being definitely superior to that of the *Trojan Women* of Euripides. Lastly the theme of the *Troades*, the tale of Troy, belonging to the longest tradition in literature, makes a strong appeal to students of Vergil and provides a further link between classical and later literature. On the other hand, if it is desirable to emphasize particularly the Senecan contribution to Elizabethan drama, one might prefer the *Medea*, which is more typically Senecan in its revenge motive, its frenzied heroine, and its murders on the stage.

The study of the Roman plays may well be supplemented by reading in translation a comedy of Aristophanes (the *Frogs* or the *Clouds*), the *Arbitrants* of Menander, and at least one tragedy of Euripides, or preferably one play of each of the three great Greek tragedians. As long ago as 1890, R. G. Moulton urged greater attention to the teaching of literary form in Greek and Latin courses and suggested that fewer texts be read in the original and that the time thus saved be devoted to reading in English translation so that the student by wider and more rapid reading might appreciate the Classics as literature. If we do not provide

our students in the language and literature courses with wider reading through translation, they will turn to courses in literature in translation at the expense of courses in the original.

(To be continued)

¹ Read before the annual meeting of the Illinois Classical Conference, at Knox College, Galesburg, Illinois, March 7, 1941.

² Greek would be there, too, except that we offer only two years.

³ The catalogues of 28 four-year colleges in Illinois and 32 other widely distributed colleges were examined. Eighteen have a requirement in English or American literature.

⁴ "Magical Motives in Seneca's *Troades*," *T.A.P.A.*, LXIII (1932), 21.

⁵ *Seneca His Tenne Tragedies* (London and New York, 1927), I, xi, xix.

⁶ Cf. Moses Hadas, "The Roman Stamp of Seneca's Tragedies," *A.J.P.*, LX (1939), 220.

⁷ Cf. John Gassner, *Masters of the Drama* (New York, 1940), 76.

⁸ "More about Vocabulary Burden," *Classical Outlook*, XVI (1939), 78-79.

⁹ Eight other colleges in the group have advanced courses in which one or more tragedies of Seneca are read; nearly four times as many, or 30, have advanced courses in which Roman comedy is read.

¹⁰ The complete edition of the plays by S. G. Ashmore (New York, 1910), excellent though it is, is not entirely satisfactory for freshmen. D. P. Lockwood in his *A Survey of Classical Roman Literature* Vol. I (New York, 1934) has abridged the *Adelphoe* cutting it by 300 lines. He has used what I consider essential to a good edition of a Roman play full stage directions. W. L. Cowles' *Adelphoe* (Boston, 1896), edited for sight reading, also has stage directions but its notes are rather brief.

¹¹ Moses Hadas, *op. cit.*, 222.

A Latin Grammar for High Schools. — First, Second, Third, Fourth Year Latin. By Robert J. Henle, S.J.; Loyola University Press, Chicago.

This series, designed especially for Catholic high schools, is well described by its subtitle, "Streamlined Latin." No real improvements introduced into Latin textbooks in recent years have been omitted. Its most conspicuous feature is the unity that binds the separate volumes together into one solid high-school Latin course. Throughout the four years the efforts of teacher and pupils are directed toward the twofold goal of linguistic training — thorough mastery of Latin and humanistic insight.

The *Grammar* is a model of typographical arrangement; it is sufficiently comprehensive, thorough, and brief. Built up on a strictly logical plan, it little by little inducts the student into a reasoned view of grammar. Continual references to it, scattered through the other four volumes, greatly assist him in its mastery.

First Year Latin provides a well planned introduction to forms, constructions, and the art of translation. Each lesson indicates a section of the grammar for study, gives a vocabulary, and furnishes sentences (25 to 75 each) to be turned from Latin into English and from English into Latin. This affords ample scope for drillwork. Approximately every fifth lesson embodies a 'review' of matter previously seen. The approach to reading is not through 'made Latin,' but through simplified Caesar.

Part One of *Second Year Latin* presents well chosen selections from the Gallic War, printed in sense lines. The campaigns against the Helvetians, Germans, Belgians, and Britons, are made to illustrate one master idea, the spread of Roman imperialism. The meaning of words appearing for the first time is given at the foot

of each page. Through intensive reading of the text the pupil is to learn to analyze, parse, criticize. For wider reading Part Two provides selections from Christian Latin (especially the Vulgate and the Missal). The goal here aimed at is facility, pleasure, and confidence, through a growing sense of mastery over the language. Part Three aims at re-enforcing the results thus far obtained by twenty-five additional exercises based on Caesar.

Third Year Latin contains (1) the First and Third Catilinarians, developing the theme of Roman Constitutional Government versus Anarchy; (2) the First and Second Verrines (in alternate sections of Latin and English), illustrating Roman Law versus Political Corruption; (3) Christian Latin, ranging from the Gospels to pronouncements of Pope Pius XII, emphasizing the relations between the Roman State and Christianity; (4) exercises in syntax and composition based on Cicero.

Fourth Year Latin affords such apt helps toward both the mental discipline and the cultural training of the student that it is, in my opinion, the best book of the series. In Part One the *Pro Archia* is presented so as to develop the concept of Humanism. Part Two presents the *Aeneid* as a study of Providence. The exercises in composition contain a complete review of syntax.

This series, already widely used in Catholic high schools, is to be revised after a few years on the basis of experience garnered from its use in the classroom. It should be improved, I think, by giving more attention to English derivatives, showing more abundantly the relations between Latin and English grammar, and illustrating more copiously the changes Latin underwent in the Romance languages.

In closing these brief remarks, I cannot help pointing out a matter of considerable importance. Whatever may be said about the relative merits of the 'analytical' and the 'direct' methods of teaching Latin, this much is certain that a clever teacher can use either to secure that mastery of Latin which is the end of both. Henle employs the analytical method throughout, and, speaking for myself, I am glad he does. It teaches the student the structure of language and of style, and thereby helps him in his English writing; it trains him in the mental processes which he must later use in the study of philosophy;¹ in a word, it teaches him *how to reason*. This discipline of the mind, secured through hard and accurate reasoning, is the first step toward acquiring a truly liberal education. It is these hard-won habits of precise thinking that prove, beyond the shadow of a doubt, the right of Latin to remain on our curricula. If we wish to 'prepare the student for life,' here is the best viaticum we can give him — a four-year course in the analytical method of studying Latin.

Marquette University

GEORGE E. GANSS, S.J.

¹ In our Catholic colleges the curriculum closes with a two-year course in philosophy.

An Ancient 'Surprise Attack'

An attentive reader, of Brooklyn Preparatory, calls our attention to a section in the Gallic War (III, 21-22) which tells how Adiatunnus, the commander-in-chief of the Sotiates, made a surprise attack upon the Romans after peace had been granted to his people.

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Editorial

Good news comes from Baltimore via *Classical Weekly* (January 26, 1942): "Dean Doyle [of George Washington University, who had protested against the criticism of the conventional secondary-school subjects in the publications of The American Youth Commission] and his protesting colleagues will be pleased to hear a report from the New Year's Day conference of university presidents held in Baltimore. In all its deliberations the conference heard only one school subject specifically recommended. The representative of the U. S. Army general staff who discussed current needs urged the university men to recommend to young students the study of Greek 'for its disciplinary worth.' The Navy needs men; the Army needs men; industry needs men of many skills. But all alike are turning to men whose intellects have been tested in the exacting studies of science and language, not to those who have drifted painlessly through curricula devised by opportunist 'socializers.'" (P. 134).

Apropos of Dean Henry Grattan Doyle's timely protest voiced at a recent gathering of nation-wide importance, and of *Classical Weekly's* vigorous comment, we would remind our readers of an incisive Editorial in *The Classical Journal* for June 1941. Whenever we find a nugget of gold in contemporary writing, it is well to make a note of it for future use or reference. The classics, naturally, are a fertile topic for discussion; but what proves beyond all cavil their indisputable claim to a place on our curricula is the fact that they are indispensable to any self-respecting nation that values the things of the spirit. We have really but one choice in this struggle for existence, either to stand wholeheartedly by 'liberal education through the classics' or else to truckle to an educational policy that is frankly materialistic. The classics are vital to a nation at any time; they are supremely vital — as has been recently brought out — to 'a nation in a time of crisis.' Fortunately there are those among us who possess insight

and, armed with a courage born of conviction, can meet challenge with challenge. Whenever some Titan somewhere in our midst rears his head a little too high, some Hephaestus somewhere in our midst will get busy and forge a thunderbolt.

News Letter Number 23 (December 28, 1941) of the Committee on the Present Status of Classical Education of the Classical Association of the Middle West and South, edited by Professor Dorrance S. White, of the State University of Iowa, is an unusually interesting offering. Its five pages include, *inter alia*, the invitation of President E. K. Turner to the coming New Orleans meeting of the Association; a round table of opinion on "Latin in Our National Emergency"; the announcement and personnel of the new "Committee on the Correlation of High School and College Latin," headed by Professor Jonah W. D. Skiles of Westminster College. The tone is fresh and encouraging. The *News Letter* is a publication that should be of interest to increasingly large numbers of Latin teachers.

The BULLETIN is very readable and I never fail to go through it upon receipt. (X)

I enjoy the CLASSICAL BULLETIN immensely. The articles are revealing. (Y).

The January BULLETIN is true-blue, as always. (Z)

The First Business of the Classical Teacher¹

By E. K. RAND
Harvard University

In general I do not believe that classical teachers in the schools are to blame for the condition of the classics. Of course, the ancient authors are related to our day in many ways, and the skillful teacher should suggest this fact from time to time. It is his first business, however, to teach the elements of Greek and Latin and the art of reading at sight simple Greek and Latin prose. I heartily disapprove the present tendency to give a fictitious interest to elementary school textbooks in Greek and Latin by equipping them with sensational illustrations which often are sentimental and misleading. A teacher should make just Greek and Latin interesting, since interesting they are. They should be presented with authority as vital things for learners, whether the learners like them or not. One day they will find out.

The real blame attaches to the colleges that have given up the requirement of Greek and Latin for the A.B. degree. Harvard, I am glad to say, still holds firm to the Latin requirement. In the face of the questionable educational experiments that are flooding our country today, classical teachers, I believe, should simply insist that Greek and Latin are in themselves among the best subjects for the training of young minds, and that the avenues opened by Greek and Latin grammar conduct to those pleasant fields in which true culture dwells. In a word, students of the classics were accurately described by old Ausonius centuries ago as those who were bound to 'pluck the sweet flower of the bitter root':

capturi dulcem fructum radicis amarae.

The trend of modern educational theory, it seems to me,

is to encourage in young breasts the idea that they can pick the flowers that grow from no roots at all.

Of course, we classical teachers may have a chance now and then to address a larger audience than our classroom. On such occasions we should not, I believe, present apologies or defenses for the ancients. They need none. They can speak for themselves if we only allow them. An attitude of defense arouses one of combat on the other side. We should rather appear as those who possess some good thing which we should like to share with others. On the other hand, our attitude toward the 'educational' follies of the day should be unremittingly aggressive. We should fight to have Greek and Latin prescribed — not for all, of course, but for those who are prepared for the higher study of Arts and Letters. We should insist that there is such a thing as intellectual training and that Greek and Latin are important means of securing it. We can tell the public that the ancients offer us a royal robe of learning, fine in texture and lasting — not the 'Ersatz' suits of blotting paper that theorists are contriving today. Nor should we worry about the twilight of the classics in a world devoted to natural science and sociology. The best representatives of these vital interests of the human mind are well aware of the treasures of antiquity. If we continue to keep open the avenues that lead to these, there will sooner or later be a new turn in their direction. For the culture of the ancients is too good to be permanently lost.

¹ Reprinted from *THE CLASSICAL BULLETIN*, October, 1937. See our Editorial for October, 1941.

Adversity and Death — in Ancient Life¹

BY ALFRED P. DORJAHN
Northwestern University

Thus far I have depicted only the pleasanter side of life. But, as everybody knows today, 'into each life some rain must fall.' The ancients, likewise, knew that a measure of adversity fell to every man's lot. Euripides says in a fragment that no man is happy in every respect, and Horace has the same idea when he says that nothing is on every side completely blessed. Seneca the Younger, if he is the author of the tragedies attributed to him, has observed that adverse fortune is especially apt to befall men of the noblest virtues. In shaping their conduct under adversity, the ancients seem to have employed a sane and sound philosophy, with patience and fortitude as the principal ingredients. Horace advises that what man cannot amend, becomes more bearable by patience. He praises Marcus Lollius because he has a mind 'steady alike in success and trouble.' He advises Dellius to keep his mind balanced in times of trouble and restrained from insolent exultation in prosperity. "A well-provided breast," says Horace, "hopes in adversity and fears in prosperity." There is much comfort in the line, "If it is ill with us now, it will not ever be so." There is good advice in the thought that in narrow circumstances man should appear in high spirits and unafraid, while in a prosperous gale he should take in his swollen sails. Cicero maintains that it is a very great consolation under adversity to be conscious of always having meant well, and to be convinced that guilt alone deserves to be regarded as a severe evil.

To antiquity adversity was by no means an un-

mitigated evil, from which no benefits could accrue. Ennius is reported to have said that adversity reveals a man's real friends. Cicero clearly took the same view when he said that adversity is to friendship what fire is to gold: the only infallible test to discover the genuine from the counterfeit. Ovid employed the same comparison to express the same idea: "As yellow gold is tried by fire, so do moments of adversity prove the strength of friendships." Furthermore, in the opinion of antiquity, adversity often produces growth and strength. "The oak, struck by the lightning of Jove, often sprouts anew," says Ovid. Horace compares Aeneas and his Trojan followers on the storm-tossed waves to a leafy oak in Algidum, which is lopped by sturdy axes, but which through losses and wounds, derives strength and spirit from the very steel. Livy is authority for the statement that adversity reminds men of religion, even as the Psalmist sang centuries before, that he remembered God when he was sore troubled. Sometimes misfortune leads to fame, for, as Ovid says: "Who would have heard of Hector, if Troy had been fortunate?" He explains that noble conduct has an opportunity of display when surrounded by misfortunes. Again, according to Seneca, adversity may be a benefit with a sad and rough countenance, which burns and cuts in order to heal. Silius Italicus holds that brave men ought not to be cast down by adversity. Ovid goes a step farther and holds that the righteous under the stroke of misfortune have substantial grounds for glorying in the sadness of their fate. Seneca's remark that great men rejoice in adversity reminds us of St. Paul's words to the Corinthians: "I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation." Somewhat paradoxically Seneca holds that no man is more unfortunate than he who has never been unfortunate, for it has never been in his power to try himself. But on the other hand he contends, a brave man hand in hand with adverse fortune is a spectacle worthy of a god's attention; nay more, it is a contest worthy of a god himself. Silius Italicus records the observation that keeping faith in adversity is regarded as the noblest quality among nations and individuals. Finally, if there is no ray of hope discernible, we can do as Horace suggests, namely, wrap ourselves up in our cloak of virtue.

A life insurance company once employed the slogan: "Death has no terrors for the Christian man who is well insured." Now, the old Greeks and Romans were not Christians, nor did they know the doubtful blessings of insurance and its salesmen, but they did, nevertheless, have a sane attitude toward death. The impartiality of death was a common theme of the poets. Horace speaks of pale death knocking at the cottages of the poor and the palaces of kings with impartial foot, and of the impartial earth being opened equally to the poor and the sons of kings. He speaks also of the capacious urn which keeps every name in motion and of the intermingled funerals of young and old. Not even the sacrifice of three hundred bulls each passing day will render that merciless Pluto propitious. Columella says simply: "Death levels all things." "Those who are eager to live," Antiphanes remarks, "Charon drags by the legs unwillingly to his ferryboat." In fact, mortal man is born to die. Silius Italicus points out

that our first day gave being to our last, while Statius observes that whatever has a beginning has an end. Manilius describes life's cycle in a few words, as follows: "We begin to die at the moment we are born, and the end is linked to the beginning." Euripides gives a longer and more picturesque description in a fragment: "There is no one of mortals not subject to grief: he buries his children and begets others; he himself dies and men grieve over him, bearing dust to dust; the life of all must be reaped like ears of corn; this man lives and that man dies. Why grieve about things which take place according to the laws of nature? For there is nothing to which men must submit by necessity that ought to be regarded as grievous."

Although Horace says that man is rarely content with life's span, Epictetus' prayer to the deity provides an eminent exception, as the following excerpt will show: "I thank thee that thou hast brought me into being. I am satisfied with the time I have enjoyed the things thou hast given me. Receive them back again, and distribute them as thou wilt. For they were all thine and thou gavest them to me." Plautus holds that those whom the gods love die young. Theognis, with a passive pessimism reminiscent of Mimnermus, insists that it is best for mortals not to be born at all, but, if born, to enter as speedily as possible the gates of Pluto and to lie down with much earth heaped upon them.

Death, to the ancients, was often a glorious and honorable thing. Tyrtacus' idea that "it is pleasant for a brave man to die in the front ranks, fighting for his country" is echoed by Cicero's words on "happy death, which it is noble to suffer in defense of our country." Horace brought the idea to its final perfection of form by his famous words: *Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*. Euripides maintains that those who have died honorably, are alive, rather than that those live who lead a dishonored life. Death, according to Cicero, is to be preferred to slavery and disgrace. Lucan regards free death as man's first bliss, and contends that to choose death is characteristic of the brave. Plautus writes that death is a trifle, when not merited by evil actions. Nepos speaks for many of his predecessors and contemporaries when he says that an honorable death is to be preferred to a base life. Sometimes the ancients regarded death as a real blessing. Seneca calls death the close and release from all pains of life. Sallust characterizes death as a reprieve from the sorrows of life, not a punishment. In this connection, Aeschylus' fine statement must not be passed over in silence: "O Death, thou deliverer, do not slight me coming to thee; for thou alone art the physician of incurable ills."

From the musty pages of various ancient writers we can also derive help in bearing the loss of those who are near and dear to us today. Professor Poterat rightly describes Servius' letter to Cicero on the death of Tullia as 'one of the most beautiful and impressive letters of condolence in all literature.' It is too long to quote and too full of meaning to permit summary abridgment. Read it and reflect upon it. A passage almost as fine is found in the closing chapter of Tacitus' *Agricola*, whence the following words are an excerpt: "Rest thou in peace; and call us, thy family, from weak regrets and effeminate lamentations to the contemplation of thy virtues, for which we must not weep nor

beat the breast. Let us honor thee not so much with transitory praises as with our reverence, and, if our powers permit, with our emulation. That will be true respect, that the true affection of thy nearest kin. This, too, is what I would enjoin on thy daughter and thy wife, to honor the memory of that father and husband by pondering in their hearts all his words and acts, by cherishing the features and lines of his character rather than those of his person. It is not that I would forbid the likenesses which are wrought in marble or in bronze; but as the faces of men, so are all similitudes of the face weak and perishable things, while the fashion of the soul is everlasting, such as may be expressed not in some alien substance, or by the help of art, but in our lives." In his *Annals*, Tacitus says succinctly that the chief duty of friends is not to attend the remains of the dead with unavailing laments, but to remember their wishes and execute their commands.

Above all else, this one, fine sentiment of antiquity concerning the dead should remain with us: *De mortuis, nil nisi bonum*.

No complete treatment of even a single topic has been possible within the narrow limits of this address. I have attempted merely to suggest a few abiding values of life which are emphasized in the classical literatures, such as friendship, fortitude in adversity, and a sane attitude toward death. It would take volumes to treat these matters in detail, and an even greater number of volumes would be required to discuss all the references to the so-called Roman virtues: moderation, courage, justice, wisdom, patriotism, and piety. Still other volumes would be needed to note the references to *gravitas*, dignity or sobriety, and *severitas*, strictness, which were the typical qualities of the Roman magistrate and statesman of the old school. These lessons and many others in the old literatures would serve mankind well today. We have taken ancient science, developed it, and made it into a useful servant. What a fine thing it would have been if we had developed other contributions of antiquity in the same way. Let us take only the example of friendship. How badly we stand in need of that quality today! — between individuals, capital and labor, the warring factions of labor itself, political parties, church denominations, countries, and races.

The question may arise as to whether or not we can derive the same benefits from a study of the later literatures. My answer is an emphatic "No!" For example, there came into my hands recently an exhaustive study of the friendship theme in a certain period of English literature. I found nothing comparable to the conception of friendship that is revealed in Horace's *Odes* or Cicero's little essay *de amicitia*. Of the builders of a certain wall the prophet Nehemiah once said: "Every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other held his weapon." Of course, it was the proximity of an enemy that obliged these men to divide their attention and their efforts. Today we live in much the same way: only a portion of our attention and effort can be given to the major problem on which we may be engaged. If ever I were to leave my home deeply engrossed in thought, I should be killed or maimed by an automobile at the first street intersection. In fact, when I am not ensconced in my office or my study,

I must give at least half of my time and attention to running or jumping for my life. Even when I have hidden myself safely away, those doubtful blessings of modern life, the radio, the telephone, my neighbor's car or lawn mower or saxophone, prove inimical to concentrated and continuous reflection. Hence, it becomes increasingly more difficult in an advancing civilization, first, to formulate the really important problems of life, and then, to find a solution for them. Greek and Roman life of old was not seriously cluttered up with nonessential diversions for those who wished to escape them. The thinkers, teachers, and authors of antiquity could give themselves wholly to reflection upon the old, and yet ever new, problems of life. And for many of these problems they have found the correct answer or at least pointed the way toward it. Let us not foolishly divest ourselves of this rich and valuable heritage!

¹ [See the *Ed. Note* in THE CLASSICAL BULLETIN for January 1942, page 26.]

Notae Tironianae¹

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Cicero says that while he could dictate to Tiro in whole periods he had to dictate to his secretary Spinther in syllables. Gellius is the earliest authority who directly credits the invention of shorthand to Tiro. There is a quoted statement, which I have not documented, that on occasion Tiro placed as many as forty writers of shorthand in different parts of the Curia, and then by collating their notes, he would try to establish one complete record of what was said. Plutarch, in his *Life of Cato the Younger*, does give some credence to this tale. After describing the impassioned address which Cato delivered following the expression of opinion by Caesar and Silanus concerning the fate of the Catilinarian conspirators, he remarks, "This is the only speech of Cato which has been preserved, we are told, and its preservation is due to Cicero the Consul, who had previously given to those clerks who excelled in rapid writing instruction in the use of signs which in small and short figures comprise the force of many letters; these clerks he had distributed in various parts of the Senate house. For up to that time the Romans did not employ or even possess what are called shorthand writers (σημειογράφοι), but then for the first time, we are told, the first steps toward this practice were taken."

Plutarch may be approximately correct in timing the general introduction of the practice of stenography, but every third-year high-school Latin student reads one passage in Cicero referring to the use of shorthand which antedates Plutarch's observation by two days. In the chill of the late afternoon of December 3, B.C. 63, when Cicero was releasing to his fellow citizens an account of the examination of the conspirators by the Senate which had been held earlier in the day, he said: "Et quoniam nondum est perscriptum Senatus consultum, ex memoria vobis, Quirites, quid Senatus censuerit exponam." The verb 'perscribere' is regularly used down to the time of Justinian, at least, to indicate the act of transcribing shorthand symbols into full text. Incidentally, the symbols are uniformly called *notae*, and one who is proficient in their use is called a *notarius* or *actuarius*. There are other passages in Cicero's works

definitely referring to shorthand; and still more that may refer to it, but for that interpretation I am not willing to vouch.

A collating of all extant passages referring to the use of shorthand in antiquity—and they are too numerous to include here—indicates two general developments of public attitude toward stenography. In the early days stenographers were blamed for their inaccuracies, in the later days for their dishonesty.

Augustus doubted the authenticity of an oration *Pro Quinto Metello* commonly ascribed at the time to Julius Caesar. The speech was alleged to have been published by Caesar; but Augustus believed that it had been taken down by stenographers who could not keep pace with the delivery. In some cases the oration was entitled *Pro Metello*, but in others the statement ran *Quam scripsit Metello*. Quintilian complained that many of the orations circulated under his name were spurious productions, vitiated by stenographic negligence and containing a very small portion of what was his own.

In Tiro's later life his shorthand system was further developed by Philargyrus, a freedman of Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa, and Aquila, a freedman of Maecenas of Horatian fame. Just what may have been the creative contribution of these two men who gained distinction as teachers of stenography is not known; but a century and a half later Cassius Dio still mentioned Aquila as a famous exponent of the art and even went so far as to credit Maecenas with its invention.

Toward the close of the reign of Augustus a poet by the name of Manilius, who is but little read these days and whose claim to literary immortality rests upon his didactic poem *Astronomica*, respected far more for its content than its form, foretold the future of a boy, born under the sign of Virgo, as a young man destined to succeed as a stenographer. We may challenge the validity of Manilius' scientific conclusions but we must accept his prediction as evidence of the importance of stenography as a profession. For the youth born under the sign of Virgo he says: "He will be a swift writer to whom a letter represents a word, who can outpace the tongue with his symbols and record the long orations of glib speakers by the newly established shorthand system."

Chronologically the next most important authority on tachygraphy is the Younger Seneca, who further developed Tiro's system, added a great many new outlines (possibly as many as 5,000), and endeavored to induce a uniformity of style among the disciples of the art. Some of the extant manuscripts employing shorthand symbols refer to them as *Notae Tironianae et Senecae*, and one manuscript, at least, calls them *Notae Senecae*.

The poet Martial paid a metrical tribute to the efficiency of the system; and Suetonius says of the Emperor Titus: "I have heard from many sources that he used to write shorthand with great speed and that he would amuse himself by playful contests with his secretaries. He could also imitate any handwriting he had ever seen and often declared that he might have been the prince of forgers." The Emperor Severus Alexander sentenced a stenographer to be banished after having the tendons of his fingers severed because he had misreported a case in the imperial court. Diocletian established a standard wage scale for shorthand tutors;

but it is interesting to note that Justinian "forbade the text of his code to be recorded in the frauds and abbreviated mysteries of shorthand characters."

The next important name in the history of shorthand after Seneca the Younger is St. Cyprian who served as Bishop of Carthage during the middle of the Third Century. He not only used Seneca's modification of Tiro's system; he supplemented it with hundreds of symbols and abbreviations for scriptural proper names and introduced grammalogs applicable to current phrases peculiar to the Christian liturgy, thereby rendering the system much more useful to the faithful.

Ausonius and Prudentius each make valuable contributions to our knowledge of ancient shorthand; not only testifying to the efficiency of the system, but definitely identifying the wax tablet and the stylus as the tools of the trade.

Whether or not there were other commonly used systems of shorthand besides the Tiro-Seneca-Cyprian method, I am not prepared to say. But, so far as I know, no accounts of others have come down to us. The chief difficulty in a study of this type is to make a valid distinction between the use of an artificial alphabet for speed-writing and for cipher.

With the decline of the Empire the practice began to fade out of general use, although many of the symbols and abbreviations commonly found in manuscripts of all ages reveal their origin in *Notae Tironianae*. The practice survived to some degree to the Carolingian age. For some reason or other these symbols came to be identified with necromancy and magic. As late as the time of Frederick II, the Elector Palatine, the *Notae* were considered 'diabolical characters'.

In the year 1600 Gruter published at Heidelberg the first modern edition presenting Tiro's shorthand system under the title, *Notae Romanorum Veterum*.

There are, or perhaps I should say, there were, prior to the opening of the present war, ten important manuscripts of *Notae Tironianae* extant. None of these dates back further than the Tenth Century. Several have been published. The Cassel Codex, which has supplied me with many hours of pleasant and most profitable entertainment, was published by Teubner in 1914. Each of the 294 pages was photographed. The manuscript shows about 12,000 characters with their meanings indicated.

The symbols are constructed on the principle of extreme abbreviation. Every letter of the Roman alphabet is used. The shorthand alphabet is considerably more cursive than that ordinarily employed. Therefore there is some tendency to modification in the forms of some letters. The symbols for specific words or phrases are composed of key letters contained within the words or phrases. Vowels are usually omitted. Inflectional terminations are represented by uniform arbitrary symbols used in conjunction with a point. The late Sir Isaac Pitman said of Tiro's system, "All the principles of the stenographic art as at present practiced were acknowledged. . . . All that authors of modern systems have gained in brevity over the ancient has been by means of a simpler alphabet." Sir Isaac had his doubts as to whether the Tironian system made any use of phonetics in the sense that the Pitman system classes two sounds that are closely related under one symbol. I followed his erroneous assumption that phonetics played no part

in Tiro's scheme. This led me to start listing all Tiro's philological errors. (Maybe they were Seneca's or Cyprian's.) I noticed that the text placed under one general symbol the words *verus veritas reverentia ver* and *verax*; under another, stood *vir virtus* and *viridis*. What was even worse, there was an unbelievable confusion of *cado* and *caedo* and their compound forms. I marveled at the inexcusable etymological gaucheries such learned men committed. Suddenly the light dawned upon me. Tiro's system was based quite as much on phonetics as was Sir Isaac Pitman's.

A hasty examination of the Cassel Codex would lead one to think that here was a shorthand lexicon most unscientific in arrangement. But it is not a lexicon, nor is it a reference work. It is a textbook for the study of tachygraphy just as much as your first-year Latin book is designed to lead the beginner from the simple to the complex. First you learn the symbols for the prepositions and the prepositional prefixes, then a few proper nouns and the most common adjectives. In the next chapter you come to recognize the sigla for the verb 'to be' in a few simple forms. The third chapter presents the entire present indicative of a few common verbs. By the completion of the third chapter you are prepared to write the stenographic outline of such sentences as "Therefore the good man was a Roman" or "Nevertheless evil things do not descend from the truth."

After completing the first forty-eight pages of the text the pupil has acquired a vocabulary comparable to that of a fifth-term Latin student in our schools. Then come the words applicable to specialized fields: politics, military science, and religion which embraces an amazing mixture of Christian and pagan phraseology. Chapters are devoted to expressions commonly found in geography, mathematics, astronomy, farming, the household, law, medicine, names of important cities and rivers. Most of the places you ever met in Caesar, Cicero, or Vergil, are in there. After that are listed parts of the body, clothing, metals, precious stones, birds, beasts, fish, and nautical terms. On the 280th page there begins a list of Roman praenomina and cognomina.

I can assure you that if I were presented with a passage of Latin recorded in *Notae Tironianae* and were asked to transcribe it, I should be helpless. The fact remains that it could be done if anyone were so foolish as to sacrifice his time and health to memorize the twelve thousand symbols. A limited study of some of the manuscripts reveals some deviation in symbols. When one considers that all extant copies were done by hand whereas the Pitman or Gregg systems are disseminated by the printing press, the fact really to be marveled at is that the degree of variation is not greater.

Any teacher of Latin who has for any period restricted his or her reading to the texts usually studied in school, will find that an hour or two spent on merely the vocabulary contained in the manuscript will widen immeasurably the horizon of interest. The symbols that accompany the words may be disregarded entirely. But, if you have any interest in the mechanics of shorthand, the symbols too are worth some study.

¹ [See THE CLASSICAL BULLETIN, January 1942, page 27, footnote. Ed. Note.]

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